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Move to Improve U.S. Relations With Burma

Plans of Burmese Minister Ne Win to visit President Johnson next fall are interpreted as a cautious but courageous move to get his country out of Peking's orbit. An invitation to visit this country has been pending since the late President Kennedy offered it shortly after the general came to power in Burma in 1962.

General Ne Win, neutralist and sometimes anti-American strong man of Burma, took over the government there in a military coup. He has harbored a grudge against the U.S. because of activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in his country in the 1950s. At the time, while he was army chief of staff, Ne Win repeatedly accused the CIA of supporting a band of 12,000 Chinese Nationalist rebels who fled into Burma when the Communists assumed control of China. The charge was initially denied by the U.S. ambassador to Burma, but the envoy later

learned that the CIA had, in fact, been involved, without his knowledge.

When Ne Win came to power he turned Burma away from hitherto friendly relations with the U.S. and adopted a policy of neutrality slightly oriented toward his big Communist neighbor to the north—Red China. He terminated a \$110,000,000 U.S. aid program and accepted the offer of \$84,000,000 from Communist China.

Although the trip to the U.S. is expected to be largely ceremonial, it represents a minor diplomatic triumph for this country. It is unlikely that Ne Win will abandon his neutral policy but it is believed he would like to be freer of Red Chinese influence. He visited Communist China last July and balanced it with a trip to the Soviet Union in the fall. Last month he visited both India and Pakistan.